

Blackbelt #2 Technofix



the aesthetics of consumption



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Two bugs biting
each other
Poached eggs

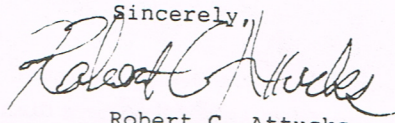
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LUV BUNNI PRESS

OUR MACHINES RUN DAY AND NIGHT.

Hello friend, and welcome to the second issue of Blackbelt Technofix. I am sure that this publication will provide you with all of the joy and happiness that you have come to expect from a Luv Bunni Press publication. However, Blackbelt Technofix is more than just another periodical jammed with articles and entertaining facts you can clip and stick to your refrigerator, it is also an experiment in science. For six months the author of this publication, Jason Read, under went an extended period of sensory deprivation, floating in a womb like environment of salty water and warm moist air, subsisting on saltines and fish protein pills, Jason was left to probe the inside of his own mind. This experiment worried his loved ones and shocked the academy, but when he was finished he left these writings and drawings scratched into the inside of the deprivation tank. What you hold in hands is a document that will surely take its place among the great documents of western empirical science, next to such great works as Darwin's logs from the SS Beagle, and Benjamin Franklin's journal, in which he recounts his famous kite experiment as well as several of his less savory doings with a certain french countess. Regardless of what your lifestyle and vocation may be you are sure to find something in the following pages that will entertain, fascinate and amaze you, I know I have.

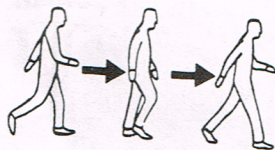
Sincerely,



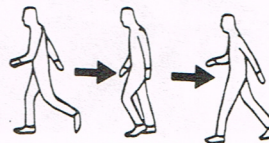
Robert C. Attucks

Director Consumer Relations
Luv Bunni Press inc.

WALK FORWARD TO RIGHT



WALK BACKWARD TO RIGHT





Good cop/Bad cop is something I remember from watching T.V. cop shows. Whenever there was a suspect who proved to be particularly difficult to get information out of, the two friendly clean cut officers will take on what appeared to be opposing roles; one would act threatening and short tempered, while the other would act concerned and compassionate, (perhaps offering the suspect a Dr. Pepper). Responding to what appeared to be friendliness, rather than what appeared to be coercion, the suspect would inevitably confess everything to the good cop, never quite comprehending the fallacy of the entire situation. At no point in the Good cop/Bad cop routine are the existing power relations actually challenged; the good cops supposed friendliness is predicated on the same power as the threats of the bad cop. The supposed difference between the good cop and bad cop, both masks the existing power situation, and allows for it to continue.

The failure of the hapless suspect in the Good Cop/Bad cop routine to understand that there is no real difference between the two officers, is based on a simplistic understanding of power. Power is understood as that which represses, it is supposedly simple and easily recognized. The Bad cop exercises power, (threatening violence) while the good cop supposedly does not. To use a different example, one that I remember from growing up during the supposed "cold war". I remember several things that I learned regarding the Soviet Union, such as the existence of the secret police, or that dissidents were dragged to Siberia etc. this was always contrasted with counter examples from the U.S.A. ("Free speech" etc.) Of course on one hand this is an outright deception, but my point is not to debate what are the supposed "facts" (the existence of cointelpro, and other direct repressions in the U.S.), but rather what it means to talk about power in this way, what is revealed by a discourse that defines power as one that prohibits (Bad cop, the soviet union) versus that which is allowed (Good cop, America).

A quote well on its way to becoming a platitude is "Power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely" (George Orwell). More often than not this quote is used with the emphasis on the absolute, an argument against dictators and monarchs, (the bad cops that the good cops of the capitalist pseudo-democratic nation has defined itself against.) The argument is a seductive and believable one, the absolute power of kings and dictators

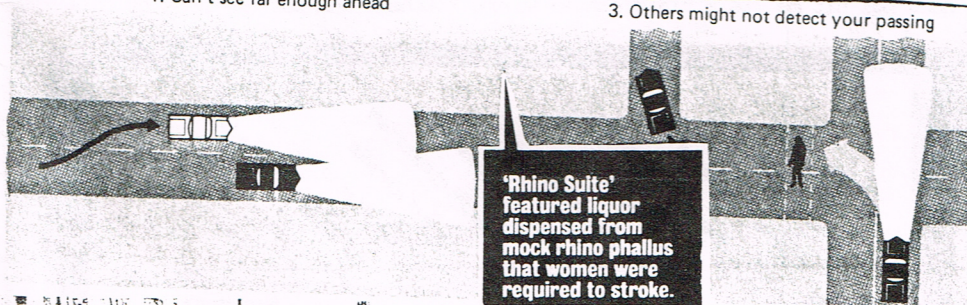


seems terrible. This discourse, connecting the idea of power with the image of the absolute and singular powerful tyrant, is a part of everything from a history class on World War II to the latest James Bond paper back. Everyone knows that every real bad guy wants to rule the world. What this critique of absolute power masks is the conditions of power diffused, diffused not in the sense that is in any way diluted, but rather distributed amongst an entire range of objects and roles. Absolute power is far too clumsy, the dictator who posts his picture everywhere is only assisting the revolutionaries figure out who to assassinate. Power is better distributed across false opposition and located outside of any one individual. In America power is expressed in a discourse of choices rather than prohibitions, the myriad of consumer and career "choices" masks the reality that every choice perpetuates the alienating conditions of the workplace and consumption. The helplessness of everyone in a society of diffused power is revealed by examining the political revolts of the last few years; In eastern Europe tyrants were dragged out to the street and shot., (My comment here is limited to that action, not what followed, which was for the most part the evolution of power from the absolute to the diffused), while in America political revolt manifests itself in a free for all shopping spree. To argue which one of these is more political is to fail to understand the nature of diffused power, the tragedy of the L.A. riots is not that they failed to attack "political" targets, but rather that every target was equally meaningless.

Just as the choice between the good cop and bad cop is really just a choice between means to powerlessness; the difference between the absolute power of a dictator and the diffused power of capitalism is actually a choice between two forms of oppression. In both cases the representation of the more overt form of power reinforces the surrender to power slightly obscured. The reduction of discussions to a choice between two alternatives, a sort of binary code of us versus them, is not insignificant. The "cold war" is a perfect example of this distinction, it could even be said that the "cold war" was nothing but an extended metaphor justifying a whole series of oppressions (To make an obvious point, a game of Good cop/Bad cop played on a global scale) Every political distinction becomes a part of this binary code, communism or capitalism, republican or democrat, law or crime etc. It does not matter whether or not there is any real difference between the two positions, just that there are two positions opposed. The question (the

1. Can't see far enough ahead

3. Others might not detect your passing



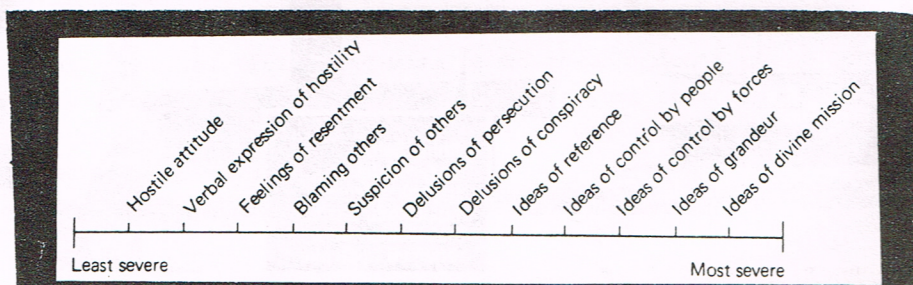
persistence of these binary distinctions) determines the answer that is given, it is only possible to answer yes or no, questioning the question is impossible.

While I guess that this critique of power is very incomplete, what I have tried to make clear is how a certain discourse on power masks and allows for a perpetuation of certain conditions of power. What I have attempted to isolate as elements of this discourse of power, (power as prohibitive, absolute versus diffused power, and binary political choices), are important because as a way of talking about power they make it difficult to discuss the particular relationships of power in a post industrial capitalist society (good cop, society of the spectacle, diffused power whatever you want to call it). The language of absolutes and prohibitive power is rendered inarticulate when confronted with the diffused power of commodities and commodified roles, a gap in understanding that can hardly be considered coincidental.

"A stupid despot may constrain his slaves with iron chains; but a true politician binds them even more strongly by the chain of their own ideas; it is at the stable point of reason that he secures the end of the chain; this link is all the stronger in that we do not know of what it is made and we believe it to be our own work; despair and time eat away the bonds of iron and steel, but they are powerless against the habitual union of ideas, they can only tighten it still more; and on the soft fibres of the brain is founded the unshakable base of the soundest of Empires" J. Sevan, 1780, quoted by Michel Foucault Discipline and Punish.

PART TWO: YOU WOULD MAKE A GOOD COP.

Just as this discourse of power does not account for manifestations of power in the (modern) political realm, it fails in the personal. (the distinction between the personal and political is not one that I am comfortable with, but I have used it thus far). This has largely to do with the creation of meaning, just as the good cop gets his "goodness" from the actions of the bad cop, power in the personal realm creates meaning for itself. Every boyfriend who does not strike his girlfriend is a part of a discourse that uses this distinction to his advantage. "Well at least he does not hit me" is a claim echoed in the kitchens and coffee shops of this

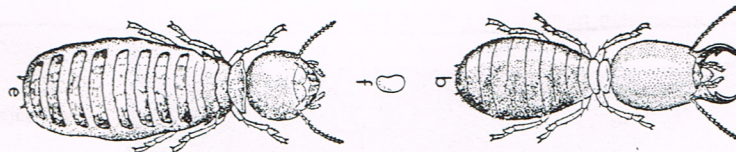


country. The same applies to other distinctions that are made, between good parents and bad parents, etc. This creation of meaning, power clarifying itself by contrasting itself with what abuses it does not create rather than what abuses it does, is an important part of any definition of power. Power, is in one sense that which determines discourse, especially discourse about itself.

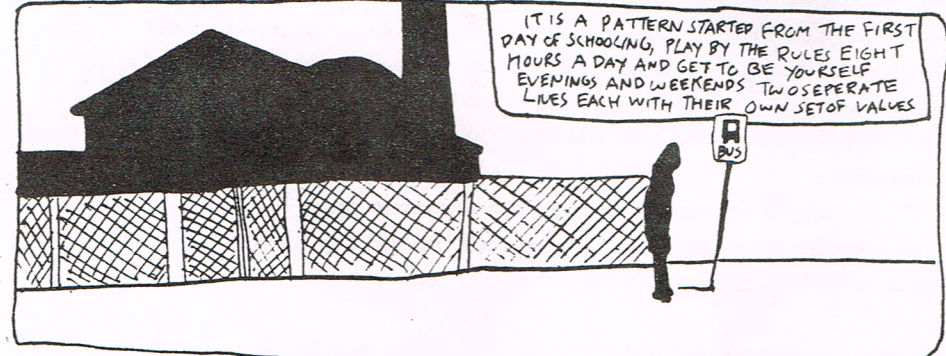
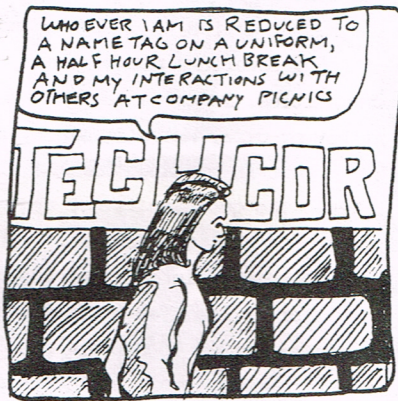
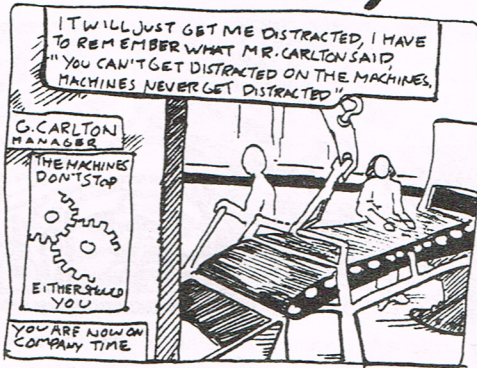
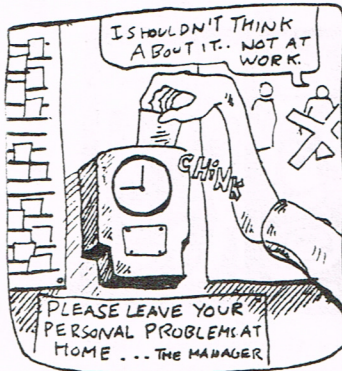


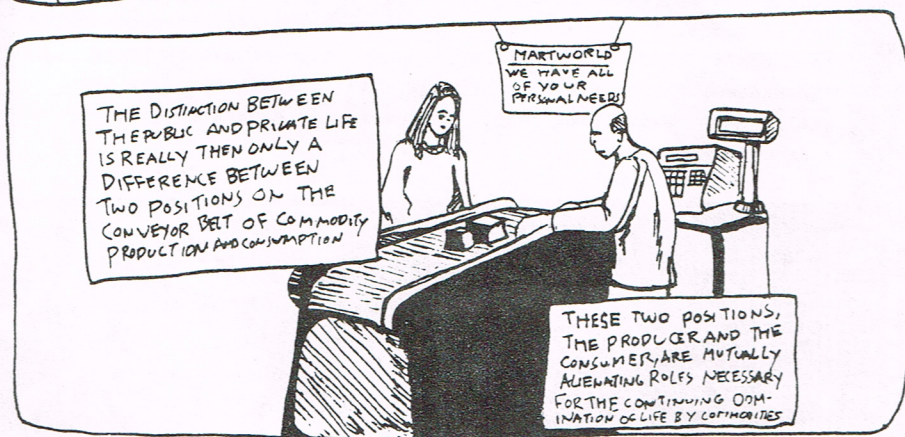
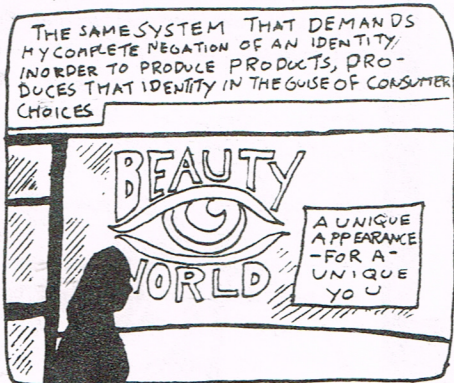
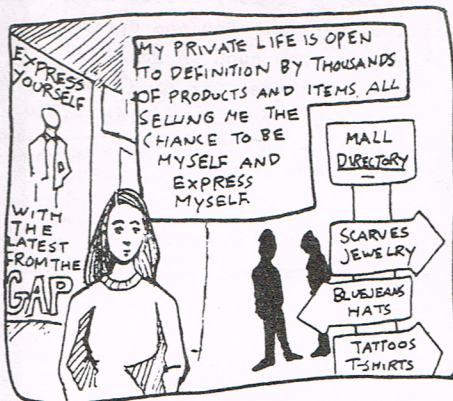
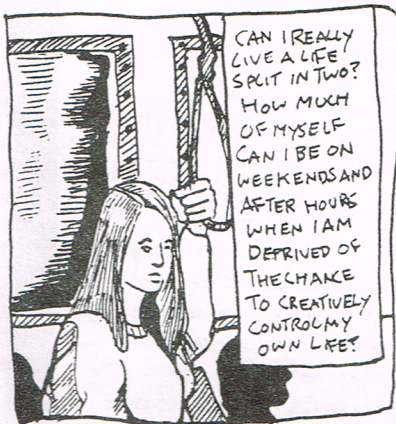
The discourse of prohibitive/absolute power makes it absolutely clear who does and does not have power, those who have power are the dictators, the secret police, and all manner of evil henchmen. The conditions of diffused power are not so clear, power is distributed across roles and commodities. In the sense that we accept or are forced to accept such roles as boy or girl, white or black, zine editor or police officer, we accept some power in exchange for the alienation/ boredom of being stuck in such roles. The question is not whether we choose or choose not to execute this power, but that acceptance of the role places us inside a hierarchy of power. Roles become an integral ^{part} of the commodification of life, every role can be bought or at least advertised as if it could be bought. There is a new political nature to appearances, in a military dictatorship the self important generals would invent elaborate medals and uniforms to display the power that they had, while now it is the acquiring of elaborate appearance and visible wealth that grants someone power. While it is not entirely true that power has been reduced to a matter of appearances, the diffusion of power has rendered old ways of understanding it obsolete, to the point where representations become more powerful than that which they are intended to represent.

As long as we remain stuck in the discourse power has created for its own purposes we remain stuck in the Good cop/Bad cop routine, at best only able to choose to be and follow the Good cop.



Public/Private Life DICHOTOMY





Interview with a Rock Star

BBTF: Your new album "Please Be My Rock N' Roll Baby" combines sixties classic rock with a nineties sort of energy. Where does that come from? What are your influences?

RS: I think influences is the wrong word, it is more like parameters. Influences makes it sound as if there is at least some attempt at creativity. Creating a rock album is really just a matter of recombining elements that have proven marketable before. Creativity has no place on the open market. However, the consumer must be given the illusion that he or she is purchasing something that is new and different. To create this illusion rock journalism has been created to praise, criticize, and create the image of rock musician as artist. You see during the period of industrial capitalism commodities such as sugar, grain, iron, etc. did not need to change, the need for them always existed. Post industrial capitalism, however, created new commodities such as image, art, rebellion and lifestyle and these needed to appear to change.

BBTF: Change, wasn't that what the sixties were all about? Do you feel that the spirit of the sixties has carried through to today?

RS: Well first and foremost, history exists as a product. Every decade has its corresponding clothing, entertainment, values and products. By connecting certain values and certain products to certain decades, a timeline of commodities is manufactured. The statement "The nineties are just like the sixties", is then really just advertising type. The past only exists to give a certain authenticity to fads.

The sixties has a particular sort of importance in this



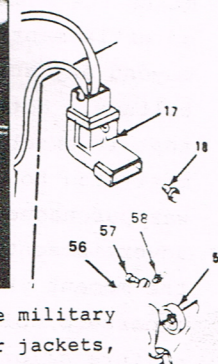
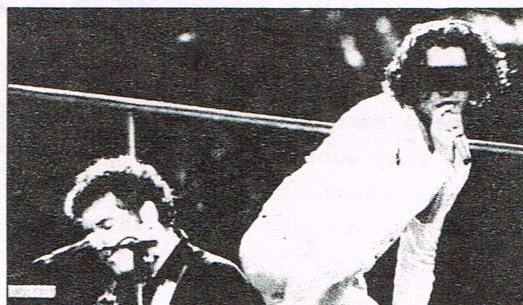
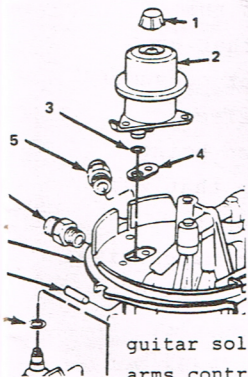
and Benjamin Franklin's Journal in which he recounts his famous

timeline. The sixties exists as a pre-established set of roles and commodities for those who feel alienated from society. From the enigmatic sex-poet Jim Morrison to the Black Panthers, every role is pre-fabricated and without a future. It is very important that the spectacle of the sixties contain no real threat to the existing order, no real people living out their lives in creative ways, just celebrities and commodities, Malcolm X caps and CD box sets.

BBTF: Speaking of threat, Secretary of morals and general niceness Jean Dewitt has called your lyrics a direct threat to family values. How would you respond to that?

RS: The supposed conflict between family values and raunchy rock lyrics is the ultimate smokescreen which allows for the commodification of pseudo-rebellion. Where would family, the church, and dad be without the counter example of the raunchy rock star? The generation gap serves as a protective barrier between any real sort of rebellion and the existing superstructure by defining the consumption of certain commodities as rebellious. How else would the teenage drinking party, (which provides incredible revenues from the alcohol and snack item industries), be defined as a rebellious event without the pseudo-outrage of community leaders and perhaps an appearance by the police. Laws that set the age for alcohol and cigarette consumption, and make drugs illegal work better than any advertising campaign or celebrity endorsement. The generation gap also defines the teenage market. As long as MTV appears to⁹ confusing and rebellious to parents as individuals, it allows for the merchandising of rebellious products, which provide profits for the parent culture.

The Rock N' Roll Rebel has an important relationship to the status quo, as a concept it acts as a defining for force for the suburban lifestyle; As a role for individuals it serves as an introduction to the world of commodities and self definition through commodities. The power fantasies of the



guitar solo are replaced by the power fantasies of the military arms contractor; the image commodities such as leather jackets, great guitars, and rockin' parties are seedlings for power ties, german engineered cars, and the best country club; the hot babe object becomes the good wife object.



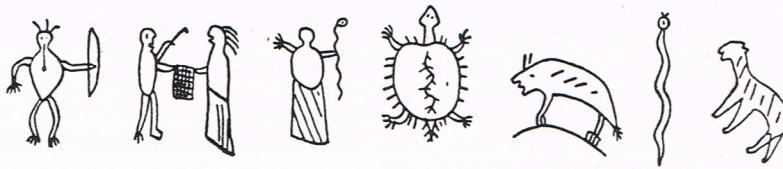
It is common knowledge that every commercial and advertisement is an illusion. The television commercial in a sense exists to be parodied, the actions of the actors are always a bit overstated, the lighting is a bit too bright, and that is not to mention complete flights of fancy such as animated sparkles, and a whole variety of products that talk. That is not to say, however, that the commercial is ineffective. What is sold is the illusion of consumption. Everyone knows that the new Maxima Turbo-5000 will be just another vehicle to get back and forth from perfectly mundane places, and that it will eventually rust and fall apart. That reality does not make the image of the Maxima Turbo-5000 zipping around corners in the french alps any less meaningful. The car, like all other products is valued the most before it is purchased. The car commercial, and the almost pornographic displays of automobiles in the showroom, are a mockery of the real life activity of driving to work every morning. This same sort of discrepancy between the products advertised image and its reality exists for every product. Changing soaps does not instantly make some ones day better, and purchasing a diet soft drink does not cause a festive down pour of rain. When a disappointed moviegoer makes the comment, "that film was not as exciting as the advertisement," he or she is making an observation that goes beyond any summer blockbuster to the central truth of consumer culture. Nothing will ever be as good as the advertisement, that is exactly how they work. The moment in between being motivated to purchase something, and the realization that what was purchased is simply another useless object, is what advertisements sell. You can not buy happiness, but purchasing, the moment when the fantasy of the commercial and reality of ownership coincide, is as close to happiness as a consumer culture allows. The bumpersticker that reads "Shop 'till you drop", clearly states that purchasing rather than owning is the desired activity. The image of the mall filled with the latest fashions and gadgets is reinforced by the image of the

house filled with bygone fashions and outdated gadgets, and the relationship is cyclical. "To be rich nowadays merely means to possess a large number of poor objects." Raoul Vaneigem The Revolution of Everyday Life.

Consumption is more than the accumulation of advertised products, but rather it is in a sense the perpetuation of an existence mediated through products and the claims made about these products. Consumption then becomes the dominant metaphor of our society, and extends its meaning into relationships between human beings. Consumption in terms of human relationships is best realized in advertisements people write for themselves, and in the advertisements written for single's bars and computerized dating services. Such advertisements represent a juncture between the readily apparent meaning of consumed products and services, and its implication in the consumption of people and events. The advertisement one writes for one self, "enjoys long walks on beaches", or the advertisement written for a dating service, "meet that someone special", are attempts to sell an idealized moment through a person rather than a product. To sell a car you present the image of a twisting curving roadway through the french alps, to a sell a relationship you present the image of a couple walking hand in hand towards the sunset. "It was love at first sight" is comparable to "cuts through grease everytime".

Advertisements, sell a product which is an object, people sell themselves, and are thus objects with their own advertising agency. Supermodels, (Objects to be consumed by men), grace the covers of magazines to be sold to women who want to present themselves to men. Advertisement begets advertisement, and consumption begets consumption. Objectification of women and the sort of self objectification that follows the fashion industry is more or less the tip of the iceberg. Consumer culture also objectifies moments, events and experiences in the sense that they too become something to be bought and sold. The archetype of this is new advertisements in which the presenting of the object to be consumed is secondary to its





supposed properties. Photos in magazines show images of people locked in a passionate embrace or perhaps a man dying of AIDS. Everything is reduced to the same level, political awareness and primal sexuality are ideas attached to certain products. The presentation of the mood that accompanies the object pushes the object off the page, with the exception of the ever important Logo, which of course connects the two.

The result is people are bombarded with meaningless meaning. Purchasing a Benetton sweater reveals a person's concern for the AIDS crisis. Purchasing a Hard Rock Cafe T-shirt indicates one's connection to a marketable franchise, as well as their concern for the environment. Of course it is really just an overpriced T-shirt. The consuming of expensive textile products, which in reality only affects the profits of certain clothing manufacturers, connects one to a variety of personal qualities as well as political concerns. In the end just as there is a discrepancy between every products advertised image, and actual image, there is a discrepancy between every person's advertised life and their real life.





Sometimes I go into stores fully intending to purchase something that I need, a pen, some pants from a thrift store or something. After finding what, something happens between selecting and purchasing. I wander for awhile paging through bad paperbacks, or handling some other product that I don't want. It is a peculiar sort of apprehension that never quite solidifies into a thought. I just half absent minded drop whatever it is I am carrying, avoiding interaction with the bored person behind the counter. Standing amongst the clutter of things, and the quiet searching glances of shoppers becomes almost too much to take, and I almost get hit in the face with the door on my way out. It is not a matter of money, although sometimes I end up lying to someone who asks, "what happened to that (blank) you were going to get," and tell that I forgot my wallet. It is a feeling somewhere between fear and refusal, I just don't want to end up standing there mumbling thank you as I am handed a receipt. I could go on and on about relationships based on commodities and alienation, but it doesn't feel like something to go on and on about. It feels like there is something stuck in my throat, and a tightening in my stomach.

Remarks: Smith is reportedly an avid outdoorsman and hunter, able to live in rural areas. Frequents neighborhood bars/taverns and enjoys "night life" and socializing with women. He likes driving small sports cars like MG or SAAB. Dresses casually with blue jeans and button-down dress shirts.

Post-industrial capitalist, consumerist, patriarchal, society (Any collection of adjectives used to describe the complete poverty of our present situation is by nature both incomplete and too specific, so for the purpose of this manifesto all such combinations of terms will be replaced by the term "Mr. Charlie", a term that reached its heyday in the student movements of the 1960 eventually losing in popularity to such traditional terms as "The Man" and "Whitey". Thus in choosing this term we align ourselves with bygone fads (the ultimate sign of the pariah class in consumerist society), while simultaneously revealing the poverty of modern youth politics, which have proven about as relevant as Billboard's top 40), Mr. Charlie trades in the manipulation of boredom. Power as moved away from its religious origins (feudalism), through its material manifestations (industrial capitalism) to be expressed solely in terms of boredom.

To be powerful is to be able to subject others to boredom, the state of course wields the most power in this respect with its temples (prison, the department of motor vehicles, congress, courtrooms etc.) and its rituals (The filing of tax returns, elections, jury duty etc.) established in honor of boredom. Capital also wields power (subjects others to boredom) by the creation of both the workplace, (the entire history and development of which can be read as an evolution of boredom), and the market place and all of its boring non-choices. Government reinforces capital, creating what are supposedly selections between alternatives (prison versus work etc.). Mr. Charlie is here and he is a bore.

PLAY

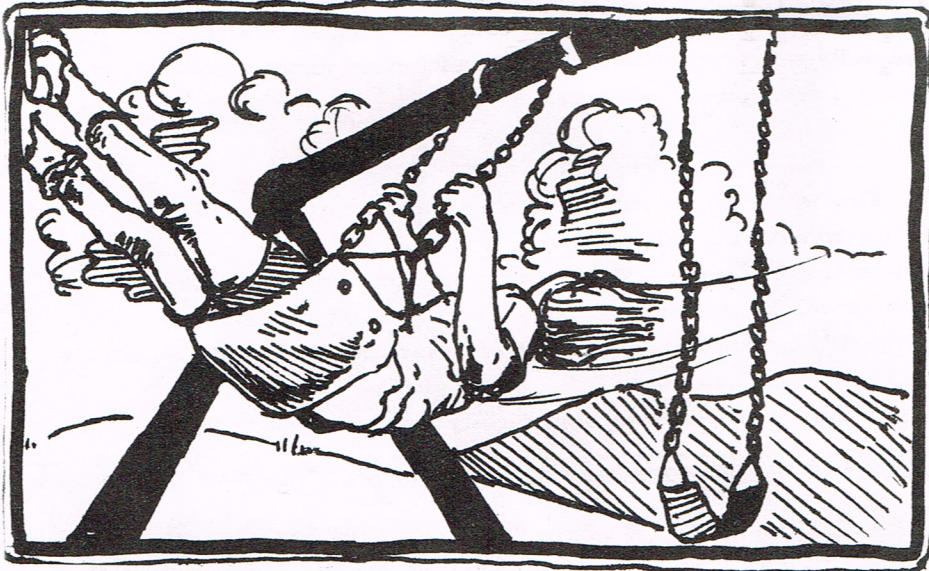
Play is the only possible remaining revolutionary force in the struggle against boredom, all self identified revolutionaries offer only a more equal distribution of boredom. Their techniques betray this truth; marches with their monotonous chanting and pre-planned routes are only a grim foreshadowing of the dull "worker's paradise" that such revolutionaries would establish.

To understand play as a revolutionary force one must first understand



the history against it. Play has been defined as the most insignificant activity of the most marginalized population group, namely children. In terms of time, play has been identified as something that is grown out of, comparable to crawling or requiring non-solid foods. In terms of space play has been marginalized to the play room and the play ground. Mr. Charlie has placed play in a cage, and everytime a parent commands "put away your toys" play is pushed a little farther out of sight and a little deeper into the toy chest. Even this ghostly remnant of play is assaulted daily. Play has been objectified in the form of action figures and mini-kitchens, simultaneously reducing play to an exchange in commodities, and making play a training ground for adulthood. Play has been marginalized to children, only then to be conquered by an invading army of Toys R' Us Kids, Mini-generals, police officers, and housewives in children's clothing.

This marketplace of play is a complete mockery of the revolutionary ideal of play. Play in its ideal form is everywhere and spontaneous, it can not be limited to one age group or a woodchip covered playground. The commodity based play of children emulates roles, preparing them for the question "what do you want to be when you grow up?" Play transcends roles, taking them up and dropping them quickly, revealing in this practice the poverty of roles. Play takes creativity off the etch-a-sketch board and fingerpaint stained tables of the art room, and applies to every moment and aspect of life refusing boredom in any shape or form.

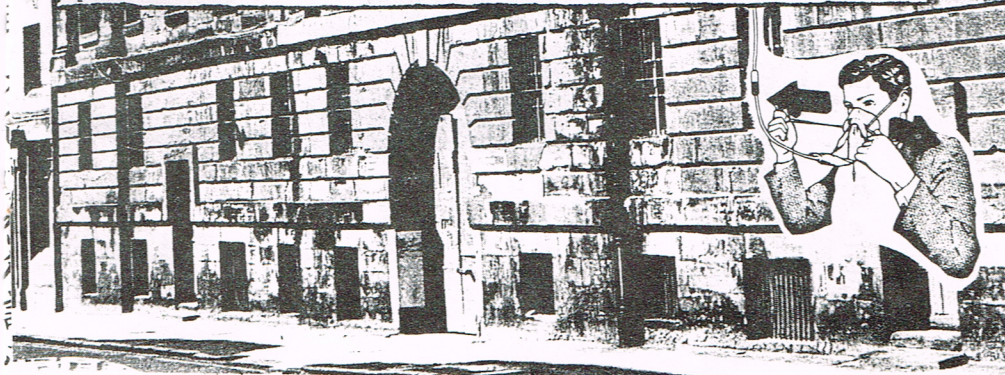


This ideal of play is by nature political, while at the same time it exists completely outside the stuffy concerns of politics, which is the applied science of boredom. The revolution of play refuses to be defined as such, to do so would risk death by suffocation, subject to the stifling analysis of "meet the press" and the rules of social contract. The actions of this revolution are games made up on the spot, its leaders are parodies of themselves, and its manifestoes are really clever in-jokes.

A rant I wrote after visiting one of this countries fine national parks. Don't worry every inch of territory has already been mapped. Every point is being removed from the rock and soil of the earth, and being plotted on the travel brochures and time tables of travel guides the world over. It is good to know that nature is being taken care of, kept under close watch by the park rangers. They are there to point out the natural wonders that you should be most awed by, (it is important not to waste time looking at the second oldest tree, when the oldest is close by), and when the day is done the park ranger is there to remind you that the park closes at dusk.

The zoos exist to distract us from noticing that every animal lives in captivity. There is hardly any difference between the small bits of woodland surrounded on four sides by highway housing developments, and monkey island surrounded by moats and concrete. What is roadkill, but the corpse of some failed attempt to cross the barrier between wilderness and civilization. The deer bleeding on the highway shoulder, has learned the hard way that the only difference between wilderness and civilization is the size of the cage.

Overflow, liminality, and disorder are simply not tolerated in the struggle to civilize, a struggle that is constantly undermined by our own bodies. This too is being conquered, all secretions and scents are subject to a series of chemical constraints. We spray, dab, and douche our odors away with the natural scents of flower, aloe, and mint. The unruly twitching of muscle tissue are grafted and reorganized by precise hydrofitness and biofeedback, all of our actions made efficient. Did you know that your arm is a third degree lever? That your neurons fire small electric charges? Sex, that which we have spent so long defining as so primal and unrestrained, is now being reorganized. "Sex machine" has become a telltale metaphor, as we rate ourselves on charts and learn techniques from video tapes. Coming together like so many interchangeable parts. Tell me how is your sexual performance?



**PEOPLE STILL WORKING:
TOP SCIENTISTS FIND
SUCH GULLIBILITY
REMARKABLE** Princeton,
New Jersey. Top

Scientists have just published the results of a remarkable study that shows that people everywhere are still putting up with the conditions of work.

Despite boredom, humiliation, and alienation a majority of the world's people work, and those that do not often say that they would like to be working. Top research scientist Cletis L. Corcaran offered this comment on the results "We thought that maybe with the decline of the protestant work ethic and



One of the many humiliating conditions of work

other spiritual motivations for working, that maybe work in general would seem less appealing, but consumption and the need to consume a whole range of commodities has proved to be a fairly good replacement for both spiritual motivation and economic necessity". When

asked if people would go on tolerating work, Corcaran replied "With the proper illusory incentives there seems to be no limit to the shit people will put up with".

WEATHER: Sunny and warm with some morning cloudiness persisting along the coast. Civic Center low/high: 64/86. Details: B5

CURRENT EVENTS

GOVERNMENTS AGREE KILLING PEOPLE

GOOD IDEA.

Geneva, Switzerland. Yesterday at the international convention of Authoritarians, Leaders, Generals, and Landed Gentry (or ALG ALG), A forum titled Getting Power and Getting What You want came to the unanimous conclusion that killing people is a good way to get things done. Torture came in second to killing, followed closely by propaganda and general deceit. Gen. Thomas Clinton USMC was quoted as saying "In this uncertain world, there is one thing you can be certain of, dead people don't give you any trouble". To which international terrorist El-Alak Hakba replied, "Not a day goes

by that I don't think of someone that I wish was dead". The two then joined each other for a night of drinks and exotic dancing in one of Geneva's best tittie bars. Followers of Middle Eastern politics will remember that it was just last fall that Hakba and Clinton swore to kill each other, after U.S. Marines and terrorists fought for five straight days in the famous "Hotel Sheraton wing night incident". And that is what many world leaders says this conference was all about, the putting aside of individual political differences to discuss the things to which every leader can relate. Other events included such conferences as "Nationalism: putting a new edge on an old idea" and "Justifying Inequalities with vague talk

about human nature", as well as a masquerade ball where every leader was required to dress like his or her favorite tyrant from history.

TEST TUBE EVOLUTION

Scientists in San Diego say they have discovered a laboratory process that can compress 10 million years of molecular evolution into 10 days. A3

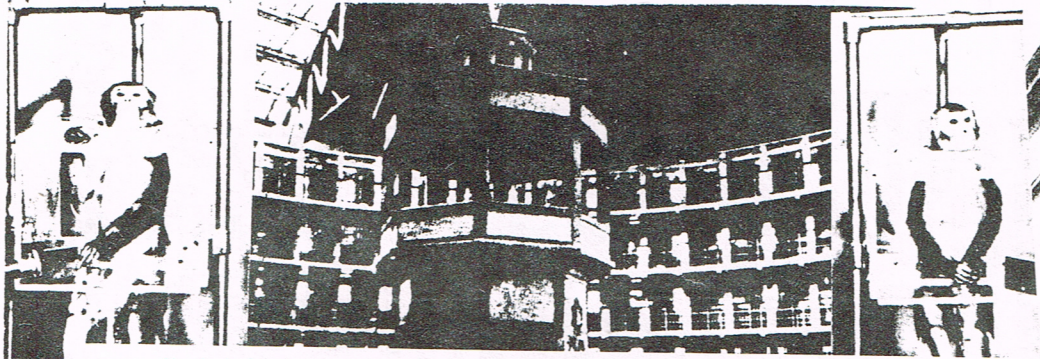
HAITIAN REFUGEE RULING

A court suspended its order forbidding the Coast Guard to repatriate Haitians without a hearing, allowing time for a Supreme Court appeal. A4

51 INJURED ON JETLINER

A TWA jet aborted takeoff, veered off a runway and caught fire at John F. Kennedy International Airport. At least 51 of the 292 aboard were injured. A4

The panopticon was an architectural structure that first came to use in the prisons, boarding schools, and military barracks in the eighteenth century. The panopticon itself was a tower with observation windows on all sides, it generally stood in a courtyard surrounded by buildings, with windows facing inward towards it. The panopticon made everything that took place in the outside buildings completely visible, allowing the prison guards, military superiors etc. to retain a constant and depersonalized watch. This form of control was seen to be more humane than the more direct forms of control that it often replaced, (iron bars, chains, etc.) however, it was also a more encompassing sort of control. A prisoner held in chains moved against resistance, while a prisoner observed resisted movement, for fear that his or her actions may be seen by the guard, parole officer etc. The panoptic tower quickly becomes internalized.



Most television sitcoms are filmed on a soundstage that is built to look like some sort of structure, house, bar etc. The result of this is that one wall is always missing, furniture is arranged that no ones back is ever turned to this opening, which faces the audience. Everything must be visible.

To make something visible is to have control over it, to make someone feel as if his or her actions are always being observed and evaluated, is to have a great deal of power over them.

Sometimes, a person who trips and stumbles in an empty room, will chuckle as if to save face or explain aloud what happened to them, "I tripped" is uttered aloud to no one.

Visibility is continuously being produced by the market economy. What is production but the constant making visible of what was before unseen. Something must always be presented to be seen, whether it be DATs, the seatle sound, or bungee jumping. Once something is made visible it gets incorporated into a larger sign system, which determines its meaning.

Looking backward even over the last few years, one can notice a huge transformation from the invisible to the visible. Reality T.V. and other television programs utilizing amateur video come to mind. I read somewhere that the new craze in the porn industry is amateur pornography, (people

filming themselves in their homes). The forces of production/consumption scream "If it exists it must be seen, if it can be seen it must be produced, and if it is produced it must be consumed". Every human activity is channeled into production/consumption. Maintaining an appearance is no longer just a matter of dressing for success or looking your best for church, it is a part of everyone's most intimate moments.

Once the production of images becomes so widespread, in a sense infiltrating all levels of experience, the question becomes not so much what experiences they effect or do not effect, but rather can we talk about "real" experience anymore?

To use the somewhat raunchy example of amateur porn videos; people watch amateur porn videos because they believe the fucking to be real, but this real fucking would not be entertaining unless it was predicated on the same sort of images found in pornography (voyeuristic displays of anatomy, male over female power, much moaning etc.), the supposed referent (real sex, the kind people have in their own homes) is lost. In the end there only exists different levels of simulation, or rather the same level of simulation with different claims about its authenticity.

Visibility, the translation of all activity into images also makes dialogue, analysis and interpretation difficult. For example the invisible Malcolm X (the published speeches, autobiography, etc. left after his death) could be discussed, re-examined and debated, in contrast the visible Malcolm X (T-shirts, hats) etc. reduces all dialogue to binary distinctions, Malcolm X hat yes or Malcolm X hat no. Malcolm X has been killed a second time, he has become a mute T-shirt fad, in now to be out later.

Just as the production of visibility reduces dialogue it also produces the new panopticism, the overwhelming sense that everything is being seen, and that most of all images count. This is not the same as the "paranoid's" fear of always being watched, because the paranoid suspects that he or she is being watched because of something that goes beyond appearances, (what he or she knows, or some other internal quality), while the subject of the new panopticism knows that there is nothing other than appearances. Appearances become the only referent left, everything can be known about everyone at glance. Like the Malcolm X cap all dialogue is dead, on a crowded street everyone communicates by maintaining their appearances, (homeless man executive woman etc.) It does not matter whether or not people duplicate certain ideas, but rather that they duplicate certain appearances, (look like a homeless person etc.) ideas and meaning can be filled in later by

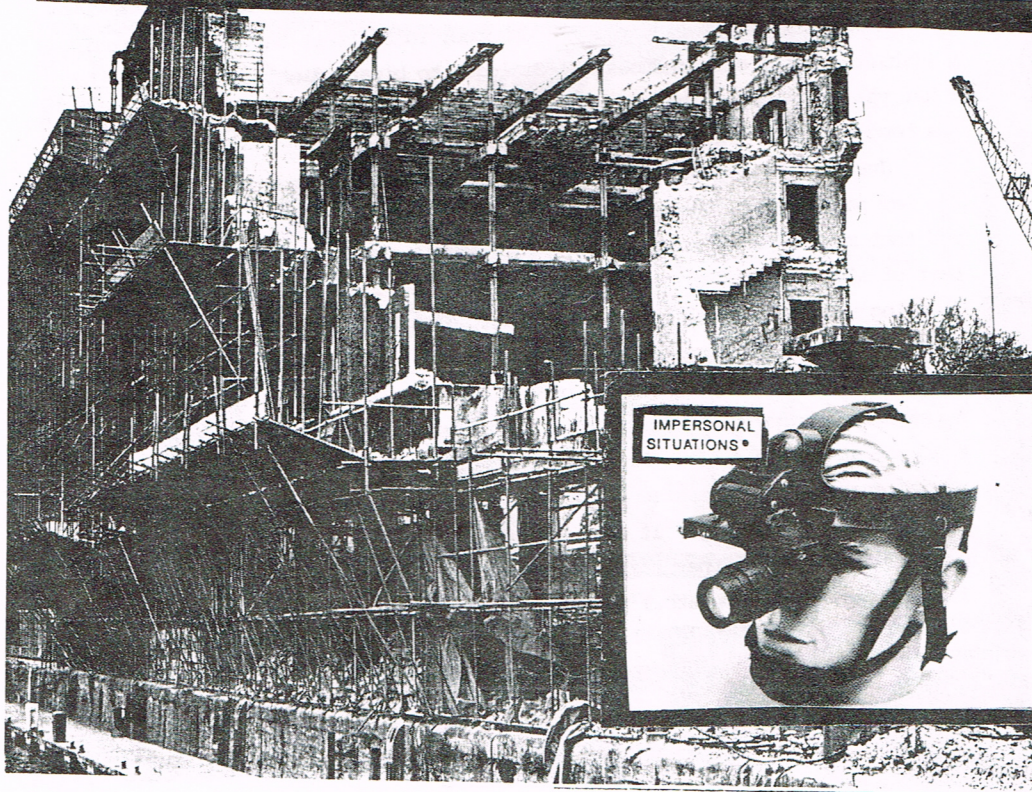


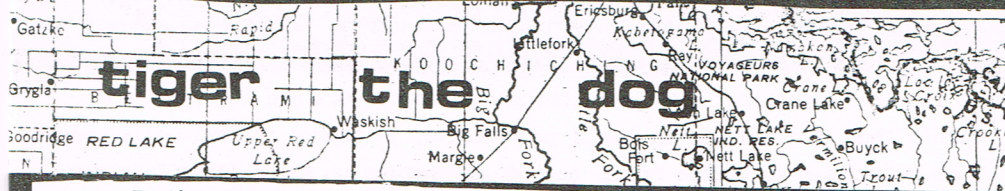
anyone who can work an editing machine. The maintenance of certain appearances takes over any real communication, everyone knows how to act towards every appearance group (homeless people, executives etc.) because of information they have obtained through images. The proliferation of images into all areas of lived experience, lets people know how to act in all situations. Any experience or interpretation of experience that does not image well gets cast aside.

The hidden video cameras, two way mirrors, and police officers that are established to observe and monitor, run a poor second to the observations people make of themselves, the new panopticism works best when no one is looking.

credit where credit is due, or I am a pastiche.

The example of the prison panopticon is stolen from Discipline and Punish by Michel Foucault, the concept of simulation is blatantly stolen from Simulations by Jean Baudrillard, the missing wall and television is an old joke I had with my brother, I have never actually seen an amateur porn video I just read an article about them, "the fucking is real" is an old in joke, some of the stuff about appearances has something to do with the Situationists, these things just happen like this.

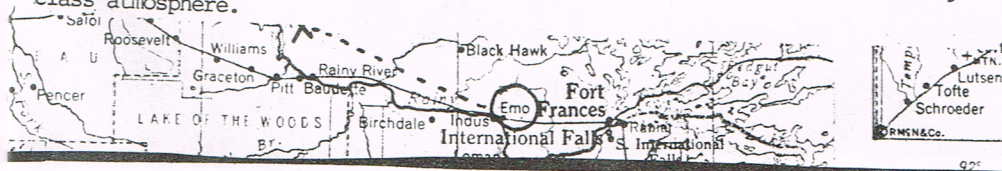




In the situation comedy The Brady Bunch, the Brady family had a dog named Tiger. Only they really didn't have a dog. The only time the dog ever showed up was when its appearance was crucial to the episode. If you saw Tiger during the opening frames of the episode, it was guaranteed that it would show up later, stealing Cindy's prize ribbon and burying it or something. Tiger the dog is a perfect example of the internal logic of television.

The relationship between the television world and work is as ridiculous as a dog who only shows up when it buries some prized possession. It would make sense that, since work takes up almost one third of the average person's life, television, which supposes to represent this life, would follow suit in its allocation of time. It seems, however, that all television represents is the liminal time after work and before sleep. (This is also the "prime time" when most people are watching television). The Brady Bunch and the Huxtables have more in common with each other, in the self referential world of television, than the people watching them. If Dr. Huxtable (from the Cosby Show) sees a patient, it will be either the person who helps him find a gift for his wife, or perhaps special guest star Stevie Wonder. Tiger the dog returns.

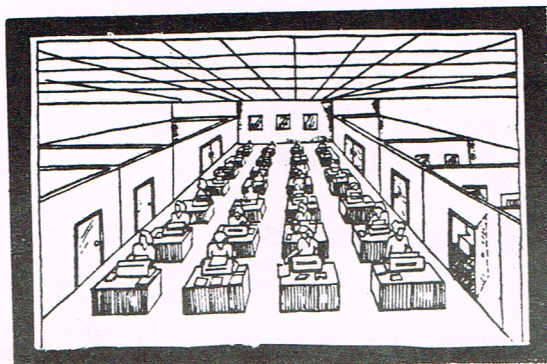
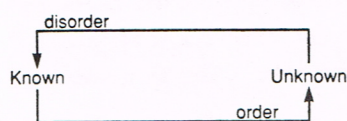
Even when the television show is supposedly about work, and deals with the antics of workers, real work is mysteriously absent. Occasionally, a bartender serves a drink at Cheers, but, mostly, it is always time for a coffee break. The relationship between the boss and the employees is always one of cheerful mockery. Every once in a while, the stream of bad puns and sexual innuendo will be broken by the boss demanding that everyone get back to work, punctuated by the laugh track. Remember, the boss is your best friend. Every year, when the networks debut their new "working class" sitcoms about "regular guys", it is an exercise in absurdity. Work, the oppressive condition of most peoples' daily life has no place in the machine that blurs life as lived with a life to be consumed. While having Tiger appear in a Brady Bunch episode lends a certain credibility to the Brady s' image of the perfect family, only the most superficial trappings of work can be shown on television. A job is an outfit and a specific set of wacky jokes and puns. To work in a factory is to dress in denim and make jokes in a working class atmosphere.



Of course, up to this point, what I have stated is fairly simple; sitcoms are supposed to be entertainment, that is, they are meant to entertain someone, so it makes sense that work and the conditions of work are not included within them. But this is in itself problematic, If people intentionally watch such activities as coffee breaks and office parties on their favorite shows, are we to believe that these same people are as entertained by these events when they take place in real life? If they are, then why watch a replay of these same events on television? If they are not entertained by these events, then why bother with them as entertainment? This is the specialized role of the sitcom in television's own division of labor, the reselling of the mundane activities of life as spectacular entertainment. For every moment spent "enjoying" watching the cast of Night Court joke during their lunch break, the viewer feels alienated from his or her own experience with ^{the} mundane reality of lunch breaks. This unanalytical alienation, which confronts the viewer with the poverty of his or her own daily existence (with that same existence glorified) is the basic premise of televised entertainment. The result of this is twofold; an acceptance of the conditions of work as the only possible reality, predicated on the need to watch more television, the only thing that makes that acceptance bearable.

The sitcom, however, is just one portion of the broadcasting day. Television also supposes to provide information. This information, both in content and presentation must not conflict with the image of the worker's paradise presented on television. The use of the Marxist term worker's paradise is by no means accidental; the post-revolutionary society proposed by many bland newspapers of the left bears striking resemblance to a repeat of Alice in which workers and employer join in a group hug after saving the diner from foreclosure.

The televised world of politics runs a close second to sitcoms in its popularity. Politicians must watch sitcoms, or are at least aware of the implications of sitcom thinking. Throughout the presidential mini-series (campaign), candidates made appearances in various factories and places where people work. Their logic is impeccable; dressing in a union jacket and exchanging pleasantries and bad jokes with factory employees makes them just as much "regular guys" as their slightly more animated prime time companions.



The role of the president, as it is represented by television is similar to that of a program like "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous" or perhaps Diff'rent Strokes, in which part of the entertainment is the voyeuristic observation of wealth and power. The president's leisure activity becomes more of a news item than his political activity. While many people may be unclear on the president's relation to specific political matters, the president's relation to leisure is always made clear. Ronald Reagan riding horseback in California and George Bush fishing in Maine are more newsworthy than the signing of any specific bill. This is because once the president becomes televised, he becomes subject to the rules of television. Presidential politics is, in a sense, just another television show, complete with guest stars (George Bush meeting with Michael Jackson) and spin-off series. (The popularity of Colin Powell and Stormin' Norman after associating with the president is comparable with the popularity of Laverne and Shirley after appearing on Happy Days).

The only difference between the presidency and other shows is participation. For the most part, this participation is illusory; we are given the illusion that we elect the most qualified individual for the job. But this election is really nothing more than making The Cosby Show the highest rated program. It is a selection made by non-participation in a sea of mediocre alternatives. The presidency does allow for real participation in that we are able to participate by being drafted in wars, denied the access to abortion, or other spectacular forms of humiliation that we associate with the presidency. The presidency is the most popular show because its form of audience participation is better than the live studio audience, or man on the street interview, that other shows offer. This is something realized by Ross Perot, whose entire platform is based on the concept of more audience participation (electronic town halls etc.)

Network news broadcasts, (part of the larger context in which the president's doings are broadcasted) function to reshuffle the frustrations of daily oppression. In a thirty-minute time span, gasoline attendants from Des Moines and hotel maids from Queens are presented with seven minutes devoted to the serbian-croatian conflict, four to arab/israeli conflict on the west bank, three to the president addressing a live-bait sellers conference, two minutes to a forest fire in Wyoming, three to the latest missing child, and the rest to sports and weather. What could be the possible result of such a barrage of information, other than a feeling of alienation and helplessness, augmented with a few facts and a good idea of who to bet on in the office betting pool? The utter ridiculousness of such non-informative information is matched only by the ridiculousness of what is excluded. The news attempts to address every tyranny except for the tyranny faced every day by its viewers. (The tyranny of the workplace, of being subjected to humiliation in the name of real estate or the Tastee-freeze

corporation.) This basic alienation from one's own daily problems becomes the basis of even further alienation; losing sight of one's own problems, the average viewer is liable to believe anything. The hardships faced by the Kuwaiti royal family and the collapse of Donald Trump's real estate empire become actual concerns for people forced to spend most of their day functioning, machine-like, on an assembly line. A perfect example of this is last winter, during the Persian Gulf war, a gas station attendant from New Jersey who had just won millions in the lottery was asked what he planned to do with the money, to which he replied "Go someplace where that crazy Saddam Hussein can't get me" (or something to that effect) I, for ^{one} doubt that Saddam Hussein posed any direct threat to any resident of New Jersey.

In relating television to any element of the oppression of daily life, there exists two possible conceptual pitfalls which need to be addressed. The first is a sort of television determinism; making direct links between what is seen on television and what happens in "real life". The perfect example of this is the government reports which count, categorize, and number every violent act during an episode of G.I. Joe, and relate this number to schoolyard fights and drive-by shootings. The problem with this is the use of cause and effect thinking. Television and real life can not be separated into two separate phenomena, but rather are part of the same totality. Programs like Mtv's "The Real World" prove this; people on television performing without scripts prove to be just as entertaining as the people with scripts, all it takes is a little editing. Scripts are nearly obsolete; everyone knows how to have a first date, and a family crisis just like their favorite shows; television just helps to keep people reminded. Television is just a slightly more alienated form of real life; its roles are just slightly more solidified, it is real life with all the bugs ironed out.

The second conceptual pitfall, related to the first, is the limiting of any critique of television to the content of television. Such critiques



of television usually focus on the interests that control television, pointing at the relationship between television and multinational corporations. While such critiques have their validity in terms of understanding the specific manifestations of power in America, where they fall short is where they fail to critique the technology along with the content. The Utne Reader ran a piece several years ago advocating localized public access control of television; such arguments are comparable to the NRA statements that the gun is just a tool. Technological devices are not just the results of objective science creating neutral tools; they are created from a certain view on the world and reinforce this view. (this is too involved to go into, especially in a piece that is getting too long as is). The television is a device perfectly suited to the conditions of production and consumption that created it. The television serves a purpose in creating the proper atmosphere of alienation, consumption, and non-information, just as the time clock serves a certain purpose in recording and timing wage labor. To imagine a day in which televisions will be used by individuals and small communities as devices to create communication, play, and dialogue, is the same as imagining a day in which tanks will be used as garden planters and warhead silos will be turned to waterslides; it is appealing, ideal, and would take a revolution of the fundamental realities of life before it could be possible.

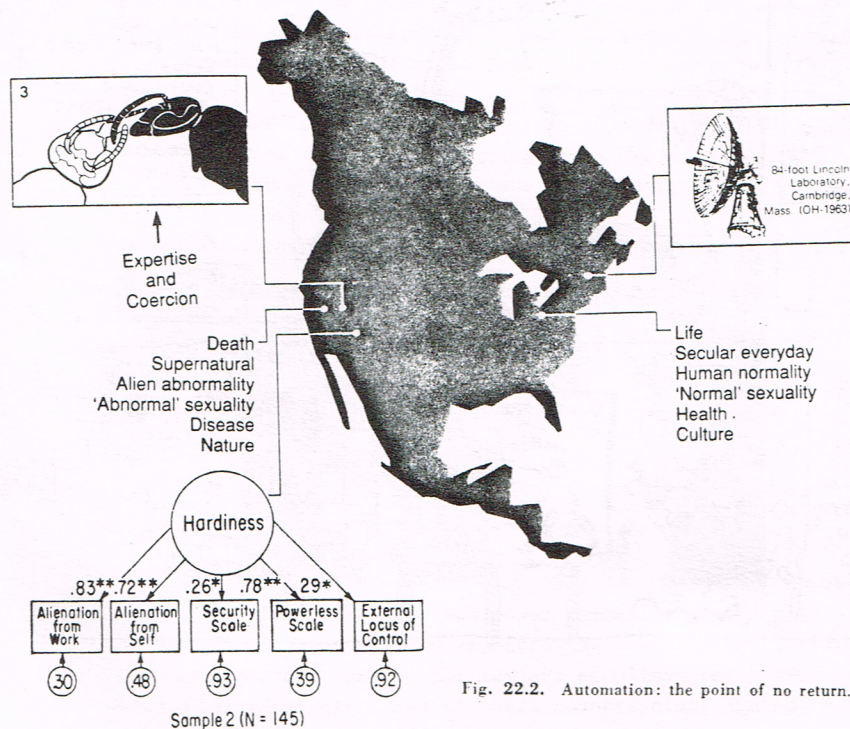
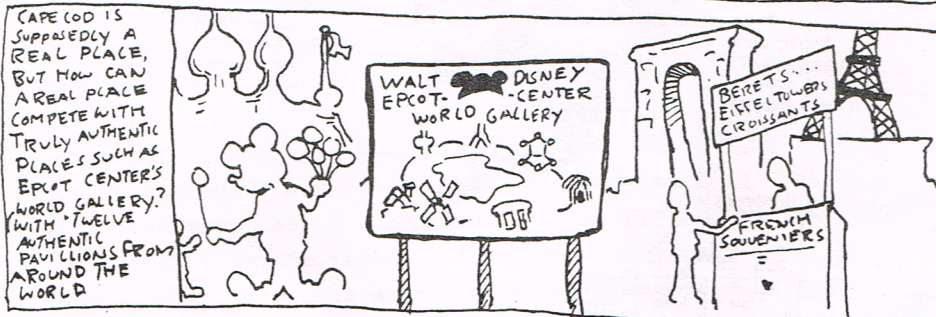
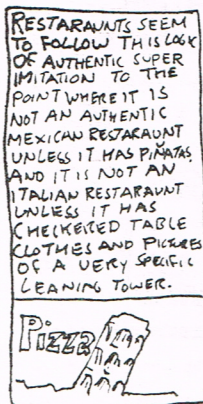
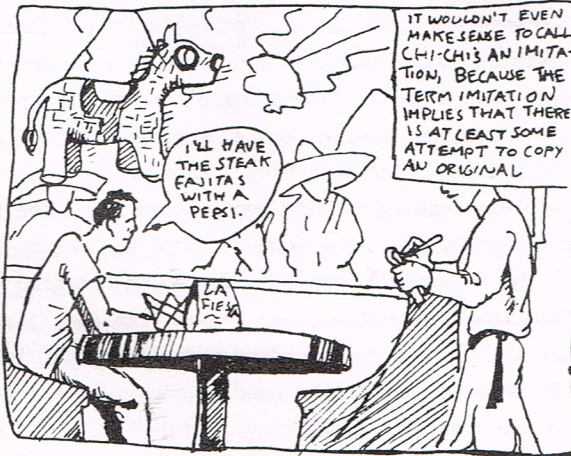
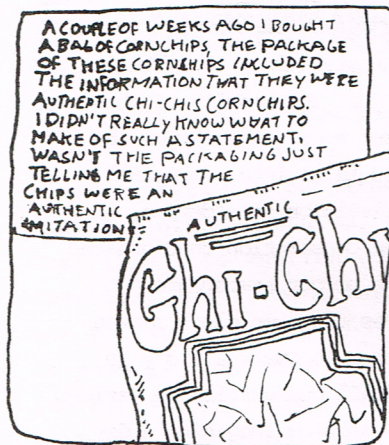
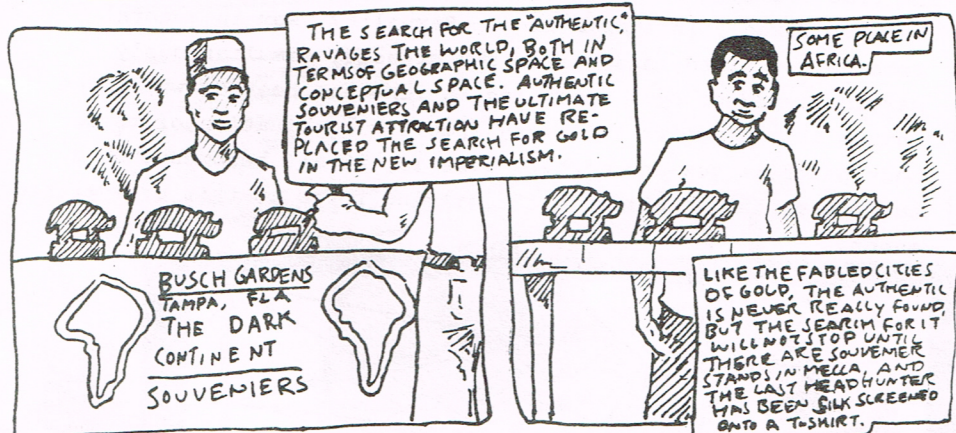
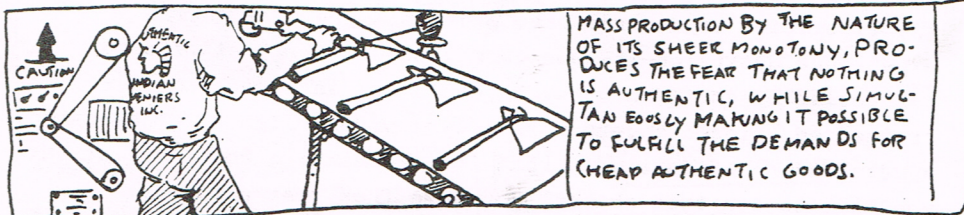


Fig. 22.2. Automation: the point of no return.

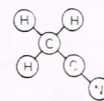
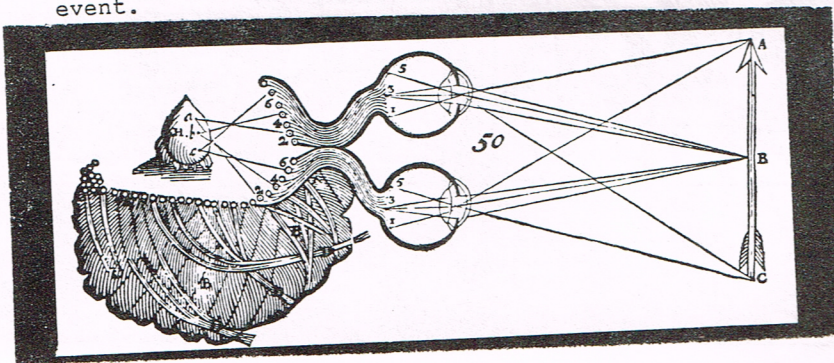
Very authentic





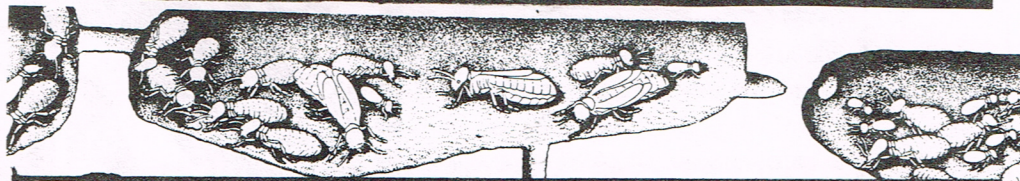
I FEEL FUNNY

Bisexuals are courted and avoided, like finicky consumers they waiver between brand X and the other leading brand. Bisexuals refuse to register with a party, and thus don't get to vote in the primaries. To refuse to identify with one particular object, is to refuse to be plotted and slotted into your appropriate role and place, people find you confusing. Does desire really require an object? whether it be male or female or cellular phones? Perhaps desire is not about the lack of a specific object. Perhaps the "Liberation of Desires" has nothing to do with the freedom to choose over a wide range of objects, (supermodels, Italian sport cars etc.), but rather the liberation of desires from objects. The freedom to experience desire on its own terms, not as the lack of some particular object (man or woman, etc), but as something fragmented, pieced together from bits of experience. The common understanding of desire is that it is something to be satisfied, you have to own that object, you have fuck that girl/boy. Satisfaction mirrors consumption. The cruel irony to this sort of satisfaction is that it never is, I read somewhere that some psychologist had determined that the average male is "satisfied" for about five minutes after sex. Like the satisfaction that follows consumption, it is a fleeting moment, perhaps brought on more by exhaustion (of funds, semen, energy) than pleasure. Perhaps desire is something to be lived, not a process leading up to an event. Desire is perhaps unfixed in time and space, forced into a choice between orientations, between fixed points on a line. Sexuality, sex in general remains too fixed, a specific set of acts, simultaneously marginalized and over specified, a line has been drawn; These things which involve this very specific combination of these body parts is sex and nothing else is, it all becomes such a serious matter. Desire is the driving force to this pre-defined event.

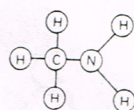
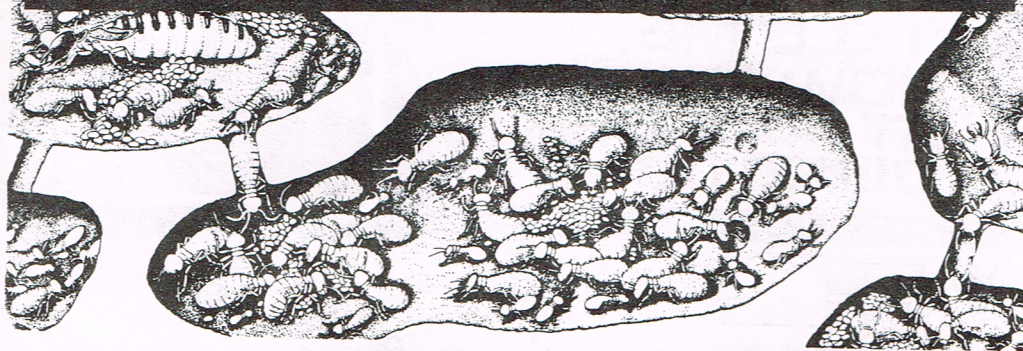


Pessimism

I often experience moments in day to day life that although they may or may not be "sexual" are charged with a certain energy. I used to feel confused about my sexual orientation, skip back and forth between the preslotted options, heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, celibate etc. Every point seemed too fixed. I am uncomfortable with the language that I am given, with this event that seems already defined for me, I reject the divisions between what is sexual and what is not. I don't want to make a choice between objects, my desire is not simply a driving force from predefined moment of great sex, to predefined moment of great sex, like some dissatisfied window shopper.

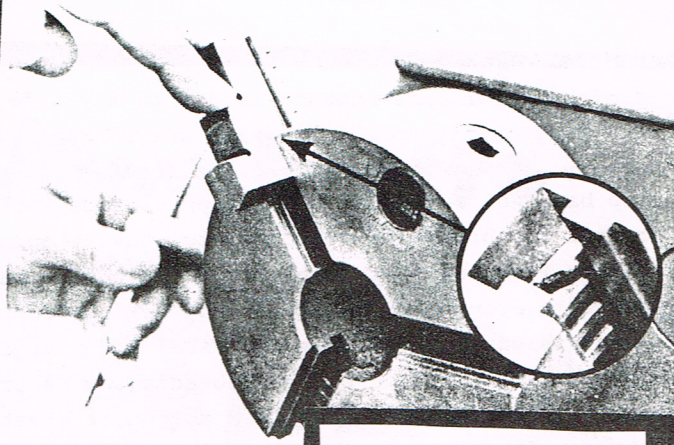
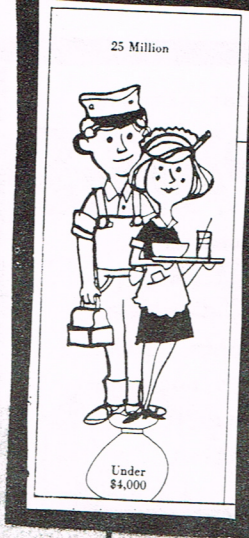


We do not understand, or we vaguely sympathize with, those cultures for which the sexual act has no finality in itself and for which sexuality does not have the deadly seriousness of an energy to be freed, a forced ejaculation, a production at all cost, or of a hygienic reckoning of the body. Jean Baudrillard Forget Foucault



Fear of rejection

"I don't understand you," replied the object of the attack: "if I haven't any money I *can't* eat salmon mayonnaise, and if I have some money I *mustn't* eat salmon mayonnaise. Well, then, when *am* I to eat salmon mayonnaise?"



**TELL ME,
HOW ARE YOU
AT FOLLOWING
DIRECTIONS?**



SPACE WHITEY



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N/R

NORM

VERY

SOFT

HAR

BORDER

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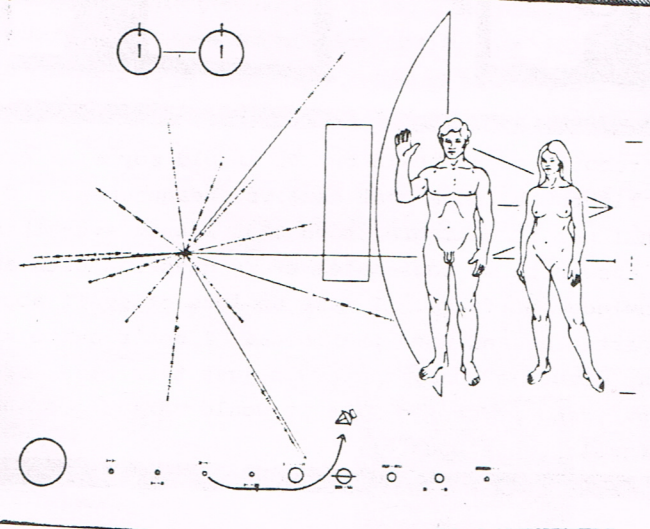
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Rocketing through the stratosphere, in a hermetically sealed artfully balanced atmosphere, the perfect representation of white male masculinity. Square jaw, firm pecks, a friendly wave and an average size penis make him a perfect specimen. Surrounded by the treasures of scientific empiricism, and the perfect mate, 36-22-34 and born an bred without a vagina; there will be no menstrual bleeding in deep space, no cycles will soil the linear time of the machine world. (The tang is sealed in plastic, and the ice cream is freeze dried) As we go about Our meager lives down here, we know he is up there impressing aliens with a decent haircut and white male privilege



ON

SPOT SHADOW

OFF

INVERT

NORM

NORM

CK

EXT 1

EXT 2

KEY SOURCE

BORDER

WATTE

VIDEO

SHADOW

OUTLINE

INSERT SOURCE

PUSH

TO PW

CL

ROBOTIC SUPER-BRAIN

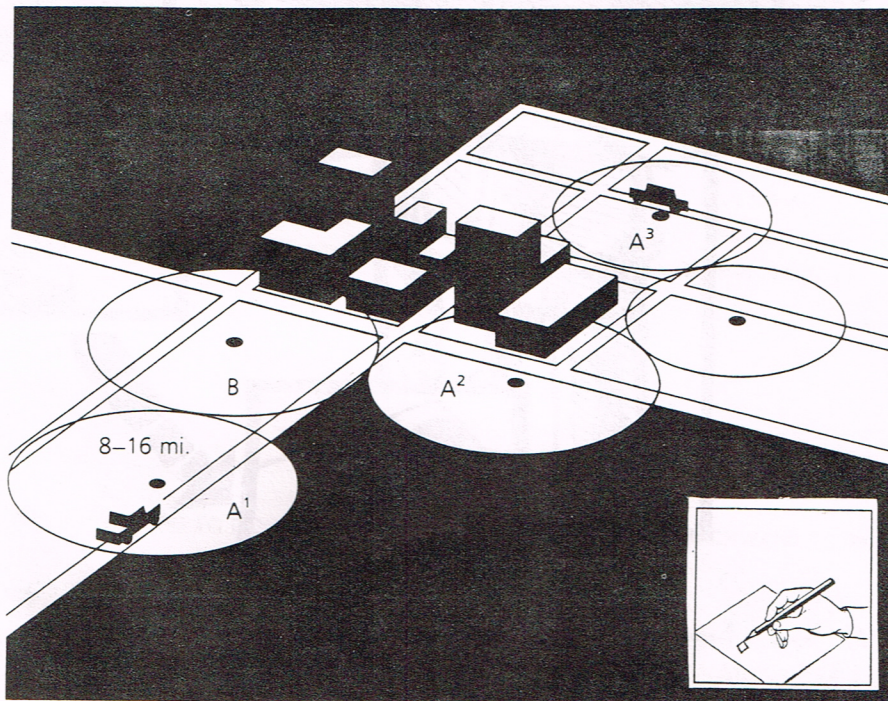


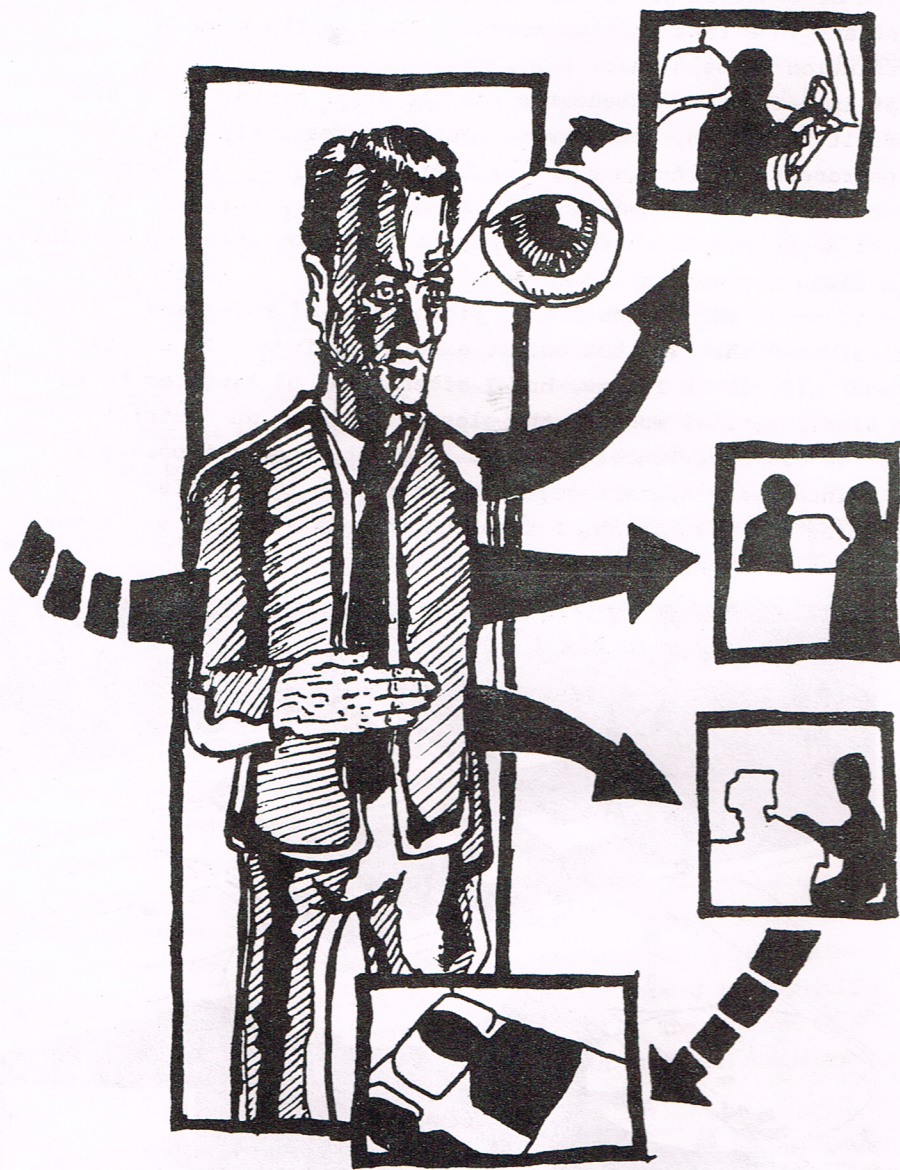
I built the robotic super-brain out of an old soy milk case, a burnt out lightbulb, some coat hangers, headphones, and bubble paper. When I put it on I pretended that I knew everything, and offered answer to my housemates every question with an infinite knowledge of facts. I made up lots of stuff about sub-atomic particles and wave phenomena. I don't quite know why I came up with the idea, there was just this cardboard box that was empty, and it seemed like it would make a good high tech super intelligence booster.



I hope to build an army of Robotic super brains one day, invade the offices of the American Medical Association and the World Bank, and drown out tyranny of the truth with facts about platypus venom and mole rat colonies. Perhaps sneak into the house of congress and pontificate for hours on the social contract in a fake british accent. That is the kind of revolution I would want.

That is partly why I made the robotic super brain, but I also made it to stir up the moment. Just to creatively play with appearances, to create a moment that exists just for laughter. Humor is something that I feel is so under appreciated, to the point where people attempt to buy it back from stand up comedians and laugh therapists. Sometimes, I feel that it is the only way to break out of the little pigeonholes of roles and appearances that we look out at each other from. It sounds almost ridiculous I know, but I often think of laughter to be an almost liminal moment, the closest thing to an "outside" that we can experience. When you laugh it becomes impossible to maintain any appearance, body control is lost, effectively becoming unstuck. Yeah, I know but that is a lot to say about a soy milk box and a burned out lightbulb.





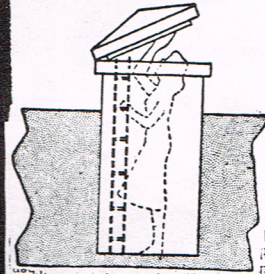


For example: it would be interesting to see whether the reoressive apparatus would not react more violently to a simulated hold-up than to a real one? For the latter only upsets the order of things, the right of property, whereas the other interferes with the very principle of reality. Transgression and violence are less serious, for they only contest the distribution of the real. Simulation is infinitely more dangerous, however, since it always, suggests, over and above its object, that law and order themselves might really be nothing more than a simulation.

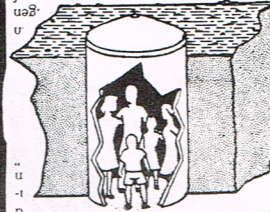
Jean Baudrillard Simulations



Figure 6. Self-report profiles of interpersonal problems across attachment groups.



visual capture without using any prism. His subjects inserted one arm into a box and ran a pencil along a straight line while looking through a peephole. What they actually saw, however, was not their own hand but the experimenter's, reflected in a mirror so that it appeared to be in the same location as theirs. At first both the subject and the experimenter moved their hand back and forth along



They had each subject rest one hand on a table and look at it through wedge prisms that displaced its visual image to one side. When the subject was asked to reach under the table and make a mark directly below the forefinger of his upper hand, a task he could perform quite accurately when blindfolded, he marked a location about as far from the finger's actual location as the prism-displaced image. Subjects did the same even when they were urged to rely entirely on

Karen Ikeda, working at Smith College.

